country by 8 million tons by the end of Eleventh Plan. An outlay of about Rs.5000 crores has been approved for this scheme during the Eleventh Plan.

(ii) Under Macro Management Programme in districts other than those covered under the National Food Security Mission, Integrated cereals Development Programme in wheat based cropping systems is in operation.

(iii) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana has been launched with an estimated outlay of Rs.25000 crores during Eleventh Plan period for holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors including foodgrains so as to achieve 4% growth in agricultural sector during Eleventh Plan period.

(iv) Minimum Support Price for wheat has been increased. It was fixed at Rs.1000/- per qtl. for Rabi Marketing Season 2008-09, involving an increase of Rs. 150/- per qtl. Over the MSP fixed for RMS 2007-08.

(v) As short term measures, Government has extended the tie upto 30.4.2009 for the notification issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to enable State Governments to impose stock limits on wheat. Import of wheat on private account has also been permitted at zero duty.

Rise in prices of edible oils

†820. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been steep rise in the prices of edible oils in different parts of the country;

(b) whether Government has taken any measures to check price-rise; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The domestic prices of major edible oils *viz*. Soyabean Oil, Mustard Oil, Groundnut Oil, Sunflower Oil, Cotton Seed Oil, Sesame Oil, Coconut Oil, RBD Palmolein and Rice Bran Oil have decreased by 31%, 12%, 13%, 11%, 30%, 12%, 5%, 35% & 30%, respectively during the last three months.

(b) and (c) Some of the measures taken by Government to contain prices of edible oils are:-

(i) The import duty on Crude and Refined Palm Oil / Palmolein reduced from 20% to Nil and 27.5% to 7.5% respectively *w.e.f.* 1.4.2008.

(ii) The import duty on crude and refined soyabean oil reduced from 40% to Nil and 40% to 7.5% respectively *w.e.f.* 1.4.2008.

(iii) The import duty on crude and refined forms of other edible oils reduced to Nil and 7.5% respectively *w.e.f.* 1.4.2008. Import duty on hydrogenated vegetable oils also reduced to 7.5%.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(iv) Tariff value (base price) of palm oils was frozen in July, 2006 and crude soyabean oil was frozen since September, 2006.

(v) Crude and refined edible grade vegetable oils have been exempted from 4% SAD *w.e.f.* 1.3.2007.

(vi) Export of edible oils has been banned *w.e.f.* 17.3.2008 except coconut oil (through Cochin Port) and certain oils produced from minor forest origin.

(vii) In order to encourage production of solvent extracted oils in the country and to promote export of extractions, excise duty on food grade hexane has been reduced to 14%.

(viii) Compulsory use of indigenous oils in the manufacture of vanaspati has been removed *w.e.f.* 11.2.2008.

(ix) State Governments have been allowed to impose stock limits on edible oils and oilseeds *w.e.f.* 7.4.2008.

(x) In order to provide relief to the poorer sections of the society from the rising prices of edible oils, the Central Government has introduced a scheme for distribution of upto 10 lakh tons of imported edible oils in 2008-09 at a subsidy of Rs.15/- per kg. through State Governments at the rate of 1 kg. per ration card per month.

Rise in prices of essential commodities

†821. SHRI AJYA SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that there has been unprecedented rise in the prices of consumer goods being consumed by the common public;

(b) whether Government would set up a board to check price -rise and fix the prices of consumer goods; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Government is aware of the increase in prices of some essential commodities and has responded by taking several steps to stabilise prices and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Rise in the prices of food items

†822. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been an unprecedented rise in the prices of food items in the country during the last two years;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.